



# Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

## *Johnstown, PA*

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

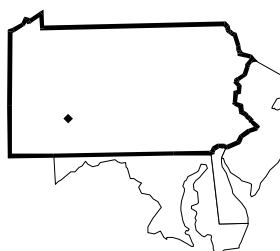
**EPA's** Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Since 1995, EPA has funded more than 150 Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

### BACKGROUND

EPA has selected the City of Johnstown for a Brownfields Pilot. Johnstown, a city of 28,134 in southwestern Pennsylvania, has an unemployment rate of 14.2% and a poverty rate of 27%. At one time, 70% of the city's blue-collar workers were employed in the area's steel mills and coal mines. The closing of Bethlehem Steel in 1992 resulted in the loss of 12,000 jobs. Abandoned and underutilized industrial and manufacturing properties have contributed to the environmental deterioration of the area. The mills were built on some of the scarce flat land in the area's mountainous terrain, making redevelopment of these sites an important issue. Although the state has a successful brownfields cleanup program, many companies are still hesitant to participate due to liability concerns.

Pennsylvania has designated the city as an Enterprise Zone as well as a Distressed Community under the state's Municipalities Recovery Act. The City of Johnstown, the Johnstown Redevelopment Authority, and Johnstown Area Regional Industries, Inc. have formed a "Brownfields Renaissance" partnership and prepared a Memorandum of Understanding to produce a strategic cleanup and economic development plan for growth into the next century.

### PILOT SNAPSHOT



*Johnstown, Pennsylvania*

**Date of Announcement:**  
May 1998

**Amount:** \$200,000

**Profile:** The Pilot will target selected abandoned and underutilized properties in order to demonstrate its comprehensive Brownfields Evaluation and Assessment Program.

### Contacts:

Johnstown  
Redevelopment Authority  
City of Johnstown  
(814) 535-6564

Regional Brownfields Team  
U.S. EPA - Region 3  
(215) 566-3129

Visit the EPA Region 3 Brownfields web site at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/reg3hwmd/brownfld/hmpage1.htm>

For further information, including specific Pilot contacts, additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

The Pilot has identified the Cambria Iron Works National Historic Landmark as a potential brownfields site. The 12-acre former steel mill (the only one in the nation with an historic designation) has three buildings with reuse potential. Pilot funds will be used to assess the property; the Pilot also plans to work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to create an urban greenway walking trail on the site.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The objective of Johnstown's brownfields program is to initiate a comprehensive brownfields evaluation and assessment program. The city will use the EPA Pilot to develop partnerships between public and private entities; identify sites most suited to assessment, cleanup, and redevelopment; conduct site assessments; and develop a plan for environmental cleanup and economic redevelopment.

## **ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

Activities planned as part of this Pilot include:

- Developing a long-term brownfields program that fosters public and private partnerships to identify, evaluate, and reuse brownfields;
- Gathering information to develop a database of potential brownfields sites for redevelopment;
- Developing criteria for ranking identified sites, with a particular emphasis on nearby disadvantaged populations;
- Exploring supplemental funding from Pennsylvania's Industrial Site Reuse Program to aid in site assessment and cleanup; and
- Conducting public relations, other outreach, and education efforts, including town meetings, radio talk shows, newsletters, and an Internet web site.

The cooperative agreement for this Pilot has not yet been negotiated; therefore, activities described in this fact sheet are subject to change.